

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 08237368 3



HERRIGES  
Herriges

AN





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2008 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation



THE  
HERRIGES HORROR  
IN PHILADELPHIA.

A FULL HISTORY OF THE WHOLE AFFAIR.

---

A MAN KEPT IN A DARK CAGE LIKE A WILD  
BEAST FOR TWENTY YEARS,

AS ALLEGED,

IN HIS OWN MOTHER'S AND BROTHER'S HOUSE.

---

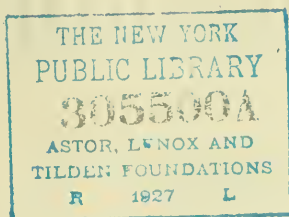
The Most Fiendish Cruelty of the Century.

---

ILLUSTRATED WITH RELIABLE ENGRAVINGS,

DRAWN SPECIALLY FOR THIS WORK.

MS. 1000  
LIBRARY  
1850



---

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1870, by C. W. ALEXANDER,  
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court in and for the Eastern District of  
Pennsylvania.



# THE HERRIGES HORROR.

---

“Man’s inhumanity to man  
Makes countless thousands mourn.”

Every now and then the world is startled with an event of a like character to the one which has just aroused in the city of Philadelphia the utmost excitement, and which came near producing a scene of riot and even bloodshed.

John Herriges is the name of the victim, and for an indefinite period of from ten to twenty years has been confined in a little cage-like room and kept in a condition far worse than the wild animals of a menagerie.

What adds an additional phase of horror to the case of this unfortunate creature is the fact that he was thus confined in the same house with his own brother and mother. To our minds this is the most abhorrent feature of the whole affair.

We can imagine how a stranger, or an uncle, or an aunt possessed with the demon of avarice could deliberately imprison the heir to a coveted estate in some out of the way room or loft of a large building where the victim would be so far removed from sight and sound as to prevent his groans and tears being heard or seen. But how a brother and, Merciful Heaven, a mother could live in a shanty of a house year after year with a brother, and son shut up and in the condition in which the officers of the law found poor John Herriges, is more than we can account for by any process of reasoning. It only shows what perverted human nature is capable of.

## THE HOUSE OF HORROR.

The house in which lived the Herriges family is a little two storied frame building or more properly shanty, rickety and poverty stricken in its appearance, more resembling the abodes of the denizens of Baker street slums than the home of persons of real wealth as it really is. It stands on the northeast corner of Fourth and Lombard streets, in Philadelphia.

Immediately to the north of it is an extensive soap boiling establishment, while directly adjoining it in the east are some frame shanties still smaller and more dilapidated than itself, and which, belonging to the Herriges also, were rented by Joseph Herriges, the accused, for a most exorbitant sum. To the credit of the occupants of these shanties, we must say that by means of whitewash they have made them look far preferable to that of their landlord—at least in appearance.

On the north of the soap boiling establishment referred to stretches the burial ground of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, with its hundreds of monuments and green graves, while on the opposite side of Fourth street lies the burial ground of the Old Pine Street Church, with its almost numberless dead.

The writer of this recollects years ago, when a boy, often passing and repassing the Herriges house, and noticing on account of its forlorn appearance and the comical Dutch Pompey which stood upon the wooden pedestal at the door to indicate the business of a tobacconist.

How little he thought when contemplating it, that a human being languished within its dingy wooden walls, in a condition worse than that of the worst-cared-for brutes.

A fact in connection with this case is remarkable, which is this. On a Sabbath morning there is no one spot in the whole city of Philadelphia, standing on which, you can hear so many different church bells at once, or so many different choirs singing the praises of Almighty God. And on every returning Sunday the poor prisoner's ears drank in the sacred harmony. God knows perhaps at such times the angels ministered to him in his dismal cage, sent thither with sunshine that could not be shut out by human monsters. Think of it, reader, a thousand recurring Sabbaths found the poor young imbecile growing from youth to a dreadfully premature old age. The mind staggers to think of it. Could we trace day by day the long wearisome hours of the captive's life, how terrible would be the journey. We should hear him sighing for the bright sun light that made the grave yard green and clothed all the monuments in

beautiful flowers. How he would prize the fragrance of a little flower, condemned as he was to smell nothing but the dank, noisome effluvia of the soap boiler's factory.

Hope had no place in his cramped, filthy cage. No genius but that of Despair ever found tenement in the grimed little room.

But though so long, oh, so long, Liberty came at last, and the pining boy, now an old man, was set free, through the agency of a poor, but noble woman, Mrs. Gibson, who had the heart to feel and the bravery to rescue from his hellish bondage the unfortunate.

#### THE GIBSON'S HISTORY OF THE AFFAIR.

On the 1st of June 1870 Thos. J. Gibson and his mother rented the frame house 337 Lombard Street from Joseph Herriges. The house adjoined Herriges cigar store. Mr. Hoyer, a shoemaker, living next door to Mrs. Gibson's, told her at the time she moved into the house, that she would see a crazy man in Herriges house and not to be afraid of him. Mrs. Charnes, living next door but one, for seventeen years, laughed at her, when she asked about the crazy man living locked up in Herriges house, as though making light of the whole matter.

#### VERBATIM COPY OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN JOSEPH HERRIGES AND THE GIBSONS.

This Contract and Agreement is that the rent of sixteen dollars per month is to be paid punctually in advance each and every month hereafter, and if the terms of this contract is not complied with I will leave the house and give up the possession to the lessor or his representatives.

THOS. J. GIBSON.

Received of Ann Gibson sixteen dollars for one month's rent in advance from June 1. To 30 1870 rent to begin on 1. June and end on the 30.

Rented May 27 1870

J. HERRIGES.

#### THE DISCOVERY.

On Monday, June 14th, Mr. Gibson's little sister was sent up-stairs to get ready for school, and on going to the window she was frightened by seeing a man looking through the crevices of an upper window in Herriges house, which window was in the second story. This window was closely barred with pieces of plank from top to bottom.

The man was mumbling and singing and making strange and singular noises. The little girl came running down stairs in the utmost terror exclaiming:

"Oh, mother! mother! there is a man up in that room! I saw him poke his nose through the boards just like a dog!"

Being busy, Mrs. Gibson did not go up at this moment to verify the child's statement, but when she did find time she went up. By that time the man had withdrawn his nose from the window, but shortly afterwards she caught a glimpse of something that she thought was the hand

of a human being, covered with filth, resting against the space between the bars.

At this moment Mrs. Gibson saw Mrs. Herriges, John's mother, in the yard, and called to the prisoner, saying:

"What are you there for? Why don't you pull off the boards and get out?"

The man made some response; but in such indistinct tones of voice that Mrs. Gibson could not understand what he said. It was enough to convince her however, that there was a human being confined in the room.

Mrs. Gibson hoped by thus continually talking to the prisoner to get the mother to say something about it, but the old woman did not notice her at all, but after doing something about the yard went into the house.

On Tuesday morning at about 3 o'clock, Mr. Gibson was awakened by noises at the same window. He at once arose and dressed himself and called his mother up and told her he heard some one at Herriges window. These noises were mumbling and singing and a strange noise as though some one were clapping his hands together.

At this time Mr. Gibson got out upon his own shed which leans down toward Herriges fence, and would have got up to the prisoner's window to tear off the bars and get the man out but his mother would not allow him to do it.

It is not more than eleven or twelve feet from Mr. Gibson's window to the window of the little cage-like room in which John Herriges was confined, so when Mr. Gibson got down to the edge of the shed he was not more than about three or four feet from the prisoner's window.

Listening a while he could shortly distinguish words being uttered by the prisoner. Among them were these:

"Murdering! Murdering! George! George! they want to get me out of the way."

Mr. Gibson then spoke to him saying:

"Why don't you try and get out of there?"

The prisoner instantly replied:

"I'll promote you! I'll promote you!"

Mr. Gibson remained upon the shed from three o'clock until seven in the morning, while his mother stood at the window.

Being fully satisfied that there was a poor miserable man kept confined in the little room of Herriges house, deprived of his liberty, and not only that but that he was kept in a filthy condition to judge from the horrible stench that issued from the window, the watcher resolved to report the fact to the authorities.

#### REPORT TO THE POLICE.

The same morning Mr. Gibson went up to the Union Street Station House and reported what he had seen and heard. But instead of investigating the affair, the lieutenant told Mr. Gibson to go up to the Central Station House at Fifth and Chestnut and report the matter to lieutenant Charles Thomas in charge there.

Mr. Gibson did so and Lieutenant Thomas replied:

"Excuse me, but you tell the Lieutenant down at the Station House, that I cannot open an insane asylum."



At this moment the Mayor chanced to pass down through the basement, and the matter being called to his attention, he said to Lieutenant Thomas :

"Send Reeder down to investigate it."

Lieutenant Thomas replied :

"Had I not better attend to it myself?"

Mr. Gibson then left the office.

The officers came down about four o'clock that afternoon.

About an hour before the arrival of the officers, Mr. Gibson and his mother went into the cigar store, kept by Herriges.

"Good afternoon," said Mr. Gibson.

"Good afternoon," replied Herriges.

"What have you got that man locked up in that room for?" asked Mrs. Gibson.

"Is that any of your business?" asked Herriges abruptly.

"Well, I don't know, that it is, but I would like to know what he is penned up there for?"

"Does my brother annoy you?" inquired Herriges.

"Well, yes, he frightens my children," replied Mrs. Gibson.

"You must have very funny kind of children to what other people have" sneeringly remarked Herriges.

"I don't know that they are any funnier than anybody else's children" said Mrs. Gibson.

Herriges then turned upon Mrs. Gibson and said in a very provoking manner.

"Why, it is a wonder, he don't frighten you, too."

Mr. Gibson, taking it up for his mother, then said :

"Yes, he did frighten my mother very much last night."

"Well, if my brother frightens you so, you had better move out of the house, as quick as you can" said Herriges.

"I will, if you only will give me back what money is coming to me" said Mrs. Gibson.

"No, I won't give you any money back" answered Herriges.

"Well," said Mrs. Gibson, "I can't afford to pay you a month's rent in advance, and then move some where else and pay another month's rent in advance too."

Herriges then began to talk so offensively insolent, that Mr. Gibson and his mother were obliged to leave the store. They at once went down town to see about another house, for Mrs. Gibson had been rendered so exceedingly nervous by the startling events of the past few days that she was almost sick.

By the time Mr. Gibson and his mother had returned home from their house hunting, the officers had arrived, and brought the insane man down stairs.

After that the back of Herriges house was shut tightly up. The next day the officers came down again and removed the insane man in a carriage to the Central Station.

During the time that Gibsons lived in the house, if Mr. Gibson at any time got up to drive a nail in the fence or side of the house to fasten a clothes line to, or, as on occasion to fix wire to hold stove pipe, Herriges would come out in a hurry and order him to get down and not do it; saying it would destroy the property; but as Mr. Gibson now thinks to prevent him getting near the window of the room where John was.

## THE EFFORT TO GET THE GIBSONS AWAY.

After the discovery of the affair, on the following Thursday June 16th a sister of Herriges, Mrs. Mary Ann Hurtt came down to Mr. Gibson's house.

"Good morning, Mrs. Gibson," said she.

"Good morning, ma'm," replied Mrs. Gibson.

"I am Joseph's sister."

"Do you mean Joseph Herriges?" asked Mrs. Gibson.

"Yes," answered she, "and I want to know, whether you can't move away from here? I will give you every cent of the rent you have paid, back again. I will make you a handsome present besides, and reward you and be a friend to you as long as you live. Perhaps when you get old you will need a friend. I will do this if you will not appear against Joseph."

Mrs. Gibson answered:

"Charity begins at home, and it is not likely you will befriend me, if you couldn't befriend your own brother, fastened up there in that cage of a room!"

At this moment Mr. Gibson came in, and his mother whispered to him:

"That's that Herriges sister in the corner there."

Some neighbor in the room said to Mrs. Hurtt:

"There is that young man," referring to Mr. Gibson.

Mrs. Hurtt then said to him:

"Can't you drop that case?"

"No," said Mr. Gibson, "it is in the hands of the authorities."

Mrs. Hurtt said:

"Then move out of the neighborhood, and I will pay you back what rent you have paid, and will make you a handsome present, if you will leave the city."

"No," said Mr. Gibson, "I would not leave the city for ten thousand dollars."

He then whispered to his mother:

"You keep her here till I go out and get an officer to arrest her."

He then went out; and finding an officer on the corner, told him the facts, but the officer said he could do nothing in the matter.

Mr. Gibson then started up to the Mayor's Office, but he met the Mayor in Fifth Street above Walnut, to whom he stated the facts. The Mayor walked along to the Office with him, and there told Lieutenant Thomas to have a warrant issued for the arrest of the sister, who had thus endeavored to get Mr. Gibson out of the way. Mr. Gibson having made the charge under oath, the warrant issued.

When he returned, Mrs. Hurtt had left his house and gone into her brother's house. He stood on the pavement awhile to see if she would come out. She did not do so, and then he went to the door and asked where that lady was who had been in his house that morning about that business.

Old Mrs. Herriges said:

"Come in and see her."

"No," said he, "let her come out here."

She then came to the door, and Mr. Gibson told Officer Koniwasher to

arrest her, that there was a warrant in Lieutenant Thomas' hands and that was on his order. Koniwasher told Mr. Gibson to go up to the Station House, get the warrant from Lieutenant Thomas, bring it down and he would wait till he came back. Mr. Gibson did so and Lieutenant Thomas gave the warrant to Mr. Gibson and sent an Officer along with him, who came back with Mr. Gibson and Mrs. Hurtt was arrested.

In about half an hour the party started back to the Central Station accompanied by Joseph Herriges, the brother, who said to Mr. Gibson:

"Just look at the trouble you have brought on me now!" to which he made no reply.

At this moment the mob began to yell out:

"Lynch him! Knife him! Kill him!"

Herriges said to the Officers: "Officers protect me!"

The Officers closed round them to protect them, and when a car came, put the whole party in it and so reached the Central Station House, where Mrs. Hurtt denied in the most positive manner having ever said anything on the subject to Mr. Gibson more, than offering him whatever rent was coming to him, in fact she denied having made any other proposition about the matter at all.

At the same time we must insert here also the following paragraph, which is taken from *The Day* newspaper of Thursday June 16th. The article is headed: "*A Poor Idiot Caged Up In a Filthy Room For Many Years.*"

"The defendant \* \* \* claimed that he had given his brother all the necessary attention and that the condition of affairs at the house was exaggerated by the witnesses. *That this is not the case, our reporter who visited the premises in company with Chief Mulholland, Coroner Taylor, and other officers can testify.*"

"Alderman Kerr stated that he had known the defendant for twenty years, and knew him as a man of property and owner of real estate. \* \* \* never knew he had a brother living; he was abundantly able to furnish him with better accomodation."

The friends of Herriges have asserted that the matter of his brother's being kept locked up in the little room was made public by the Gibsons for malicious purposes or to obtain money from him; because the neighbors all around knew for at least seventeen years past that this insane man had been kept in the house and that none of them had ever complained about it.

So far from this being true, the Gibsons utterly refused all offers of reward made by the Sister to induce them to leave the city and drop the case of Herriges. Moreover they not only did not owe any rent but as will be seen from the receipt already given paid their month's rent in advance fully and honestly. Still further after Herriges refused to give them back what rent would be coming to them, if they removed, they secured another house down town, and moved away from the one they rented of Herriges, though they did not give up the key till the full month had expired. Mrs. Gibson and her son told us they did this because of Herriges refusal to refund them the rent that would be due them.

And Mrs. Gibson who is a lady of nervous temperament, assured us that her constant dread was that at some time this maniac or idiot would break out of his little cagelike room and get into her house and kill herself and her children. And it requires no fervid imagination to believe this, when it is remembered that her window and that of the crazy man

were not more than twelve feet apart with a shed between them extending seven or eight feet. Then in the day time she would see him handling the wooden bars at his window and glaring out between the slats, while in the stillness of the night she would hear him mumbling, cursing and making noises as she thought like some one trying to get loose. If that would not terrify a mother lying alone with her little children at night we hardly know what would.

*The Above is a correct Narrative.*

THOMAS J. GIBSON, Jr.

#### THE VICTIM RELEASED.

When the Policemen arrived for the purpose of releasing John Herriges, they found that great efforts had been made to cleanse him as well as the room in which he had been kept. They at once took the captive down stairs and out in the street where the light seemed to stun him. Joseph Herriges was now arrested and taken to the Central Station, where he was bound over in the sum of five thousand dollars to answer the charge of thus inhumanly treating his unfortunate brother. John was, on the evidence of Doctors Mayers and Betts sent to the Insane Department at Blockley Almshouse.

#### THE HOUSE MOBBED.

Of course it spread like wildfire in the neighborhood of Herriges house that the police had visited it, and found there a man who had been confined for nearly his whole life-time in a little cage of a room. In consequence a great multitude of curious people at once collected on Fourth Street and Lombard Street, and as the story was repeated from mouth to mouth, a feeling of anger spread through the assembled hundreds that quickly broke out into violent demonstrations.

Hoots and yells and curses were indulged in, and such cries as:

"Burn the d—d house down! Bring out the infernal wretches! Lynch them! Tear them out! Hang them! Poor fellow! how horrible to keep him that way! Down with the shanty boys!"

At this moment some person in the midst of the mob hurled a stone at the wooden image that stands at the entrance to the store. This was like a spark in a train of gunpowder, and amidst a shower of missiles a rush was made for the apparently fated dwelling.



But at this juncture some one shouted out :

"Back! back! there's only old women in the house! He's run away for the police!"

This stopped the rush, and without doubt saved the building from speedy demolition at the hands of the enraged mob.

Meantime Herriges himself had walked out of the house and started up Fourth Street, on his way to the station-house to obtain a force of policemen to protect his property from the threatened attack. He was at once discovered and recognized by the infuriated people, who with one accord dashed after him with frightful yells and cries of

"Kill him! Run him up to the lamp-post "

It was about this time that several gentlemen connected with the newspaper press arrived on the scene for the purpose of obtaining particulars of the case.

On entering the dwelling, Herriges mother, a very old; and as the reporters describe her, "weasened faced woman," seized one of them and begged him to save her.

"Oh, save me! for the mob is throwing bricks and stones at the house! They are going to burn it down, and burn us all alive in it."

She was assured that she would be protected, and that no harm would befall her; and a special messenger was despatched to the police station to have a powerful posse of men hurried down to save the place. Each moment the mob was growing larger and increasing in the violence of its demonstrations, and had not the force of police arrived shortly after this, there is no doubt but that the house would have been torn completely down, and perhaps burned. Happily, however, such a result was averted by prompt action on the part of the authorities.

The newspaper gentlemen, thereupon, had ample opportunity to proceed with their visit of inquiry.

A respectable looking woman led the way up stairs ascending which required more than ordinary effort, not only on account of their wretched condition, but also on account of the frightful stench that came from the late abode of the imbecile.

This person informed the visitors that two rooms had been set apart for the use of John. The "parlor" as she called the den on the first or ground floor was entirely destitute of any furniture but the remains of an ancient sofa, a regular skeleton with nothing left but the wooden slats. Over this was a horribly filthy quilt. This was the imbecile's "parlor." His "bed-room" was the cage to which reference has already been made. The scanty glimmering light that forced its way in between the wooden slats nailed across the window was just sufficient to show the efforts that had been so hurriedly but abortively made to cleanse the den.

Most prominent was a bed freshly placed there and covered with a

middling good coverlet. One of the gentlemen remarked as he noticed this.

"Ah, I see you have put a bed in here. There was none when John was taken out."

"Oh, yes it was," said the woman quickly. "The bed was always here, but we have put a spread over it. We did not do any thing else."

"Yes you have done something else," was the rejoinder. "You scraped away several inches of filth off this floor, and whitewashed and scrubbed it, it is all wet yet."

"Oh well, said she, "the poor old woman down there was not able to keep him clean at all. She is eighty years old and the most devoted loving mother possible, feeding him with her own hands and providing for him every delicacy, like strawberries and such things as that."

"Well, now what was the reason you had John confined here?"

"John studied too hard when he tried to get into the High School and turned his brain. When he was first wrong his brother Joseph, who is the kindest hearted man alive, had him taken to a public institution; but his mother got uneasy about him and he was brought home again; and Dr. Goddard was called in to attend him. The doctor said he needed nothing but kindness and skillful nursing, which they gave him with an affection beautiful to behold."

In reply to an inquiry of how long the poor fellow had been locked up in this room, she said:

"He was'n't locked up here at all. He had the range of the whole house."

"How long has he been out of his mind?" asked a gentleman.

"Somewhere about eighteen years."

"Are you a relation of his?"

"Oh, no, I am only a neighbor, and came in to stay with his poor old mother, who is nearly scared to death."

"Has he any relatives except his mother and brother?"

"Yes, he has four sisters."

About this time Joseph Herriges, nearly dead with fright, returned with the police force, and expressed great gratification at the presence of the reporters, in order that they might tell his part of the story, and thus have *reliable* facts to give to the public instead of a pack of lies told by the neighbors. He said:

"John, when a boy, was very intellectual, and I had resolved to give him a good education, so I got him into the public school, also into a night school, and had him taught penmanship as well as cigar-making.

"Once when he attended a lecture he fell as he came down stairs, and struck his head such a violent blow that he never was the same boy afterwards, but gradually lost his mind. That has been about twelve years ago."

It will be noticed here that the woman had previously stated eighteen years. This was the first discrepancy. Herriges continued:

"I took him to the almshouse, where he was under Dr. Robert Smith's care for a month. Then his mother and his sister *here* visited every day." [Here Herriges pointed to the woman who had positively said she was only a *neighbor*.] "At last, to please mother, I brought him home and called in Doctor Gardner, who said, after a long attendance, that he could do him no good. I have devoted my life to that boy, and washed him every day, and attended to his wants whenever I attended to my own, and combed and fed him."

"Then how is it that his hair and beard have become just like felted cloth with filth, and how is it that he is covered from head to foot with vermin?"

"What! how!" exclaimed Herriges with a decidedly mixed expression on his countenance. "Was there vermin? Well I don't know how he got them. I never saw any that's certain."

"Was he so very violent that you kept him locked up in this cage?"

"Oh, no, John was always as gentle as a lamb."

"Then what are those iron and wooden slats at that window for?"

"Oh, well, we were afraid that he might take a fit some time and get into the street and say strange things."

At this juncture of the garbled narrative, Herriges became flurried, and begged the reporters to do him justice, repeating the words.

"Now you will do me justice, won't you? You see they say I have kept him imprisoned in this way to get his share of the property. He has not got a cent in the world, for this house is only the property of mother during her life time. It is all she has and when she dies it will have to be divided among the whole six of us."

"But look here," interrupted a gentlemen of the party, what about those houses on Lombard street and the houses on Fourth street?"

"Oh, those are all my own," answered he. "I worked and earned them myself."

The questioner replied.

"But you told me this morning that your father died in Oregon and left all his property to you alone. How do you make that agree with this last statement?"

"Don't interrupt me. You confuse me, and put me out. I am trying to tell a straight story and you throw me out. I'll tell you again exactly all."

He then repeated his former statement and wound up with a fresh appeal to be done justly by; which seemed in his mind to mean that his statement alone should be given to the public. But he was told that Mrs. Gibson's story would be published as well as his own, whereupon

another sister, who had just arrived on the scene, pronounced Mrs. Gibson a liar, and added her solicitations to have that part of the history suspended.

On a subsequent visit, the sister who had represented herself as only a neighbor, repeated the statements that been previously made by her and her brother with a few more variations and contradictions. For instance she remarked that the papers said John was a boy of eight years old when he was first put in the cage, or little room, "Now that is false, for he was between twenty-three and twenty-four when he went insane." On the previous day she had said that he went crazy when he was trying to get into the High School.

#### TRYING TO GET GIBSON AWAY.

On June 16th, Alderman Kerr gave one of the sisters, Mary Ann Hurtt, who resides at 707 Girard Avenue, a hearing on the charge of tampering with the witness, Mrs. Gibson's son.

Mr. Thomas J. Gibson, Jr., residing at 337 Lombard Street, testified that Mrs. Hurtt came to his house and asked him whether he could not drop that case and get out of the way, so as not to testify, saying that if he would she would pay him back all the rent he had paid her for the place he was occupying, and would make him a handsome present besides that.

The whole statement was most vehemently denied by the accused, who, however, was held in five hundred dollars bail to answer the charge at court. Her brother Joseph entered the required security.

#### THE VICTIM REMOVED TO THE ALMSHOUSE.

As soon as Alderman Kerr made the requisite order to that effect, the poor imbecile who had been shut up in his cage for so long a time was placed in a carriage and taken promptly to Blockley Almshouse.

The attendants and officials who received him aver that in all their experience they have never seen such a heart-rending sight as was John Herriges when brought to the institution. And this, it will be recollected, was after the poor wretch had been submitted to the partial cleansing that his relatives gave him immediately after the visit paid them by Mrs. Gibson in relation to the captive.

At once, upon his arrival at the hospital of the almshouse, he was stripped of the slight filthy salt-bag petticoat, and his body submitted to a thorough but careful scrubbing, after which the flesh was, with equal care, rubbed until the natural color of the skin began to make its appearance through the deep stain of accumulated filth of so many years.



Next his hair was clipped short, after which fully half an inch of solid filth and dirt, as hard and tough as leather, was scraped away from his scalp. After all this was done, which occupied a long time, he was dressed in a clean suit of the material used for the clothing of the inmates and placed in a cell, in which, also, he was securely locked at night, to prevent him harming either himself or others. But this was ascertained to be entirely unnecessary, as the poor fellow was as docile and quiet as a lamb.

After his face was cleaned off, the peculiar pallor of his countenance, resulting from the great length of time he was imprisoned in his noisome cell, was almost unearthly and strangely striking.

The muscles of his body were like so many flabby strings, from being never brought into exercise, rendering him very feeble, though naturally, to judge from the size of his frame, he would be a man of great physical strength.

At first, after his release, his favorite position was a kind of sitting squatting posture, with the hands resting upon the knees, the back bent, and head hanging down.

If ordered to get up, he would do so promptly, but rather slowly, as he was obliged to remove his hands from his knees and place them on the back of his hips. He would get up and stand like a bent over statue.

"Now then, John, walk along."

At this order he would shuffle forward for a step or two, or about the length of the cage in which he had been confined, and then manifest a desire to turn round and shuffle back, like a sentry walking his beat.

An attendant took his arm, however, saying :

"Come, John, walk straight now ; lean on me."

This kindness appeared strange to him, and he made great efforts to straighten up and walk the same way as his friend, looking meanwhile surprised, perhaps to think he could get so far, and that some one could speak kindly to him.

His appetite was good, and he would eat whatever was given him with evident relish. In fact he could be compared to nothing more than an automaton, a human machine, as will be seen from the following conversation which a gentlemen held with him.

"John, where is your right arm ?"

"There," was the reply, as he turned his head and looked at his arm, partially raising the member.

"Raise your left arm."

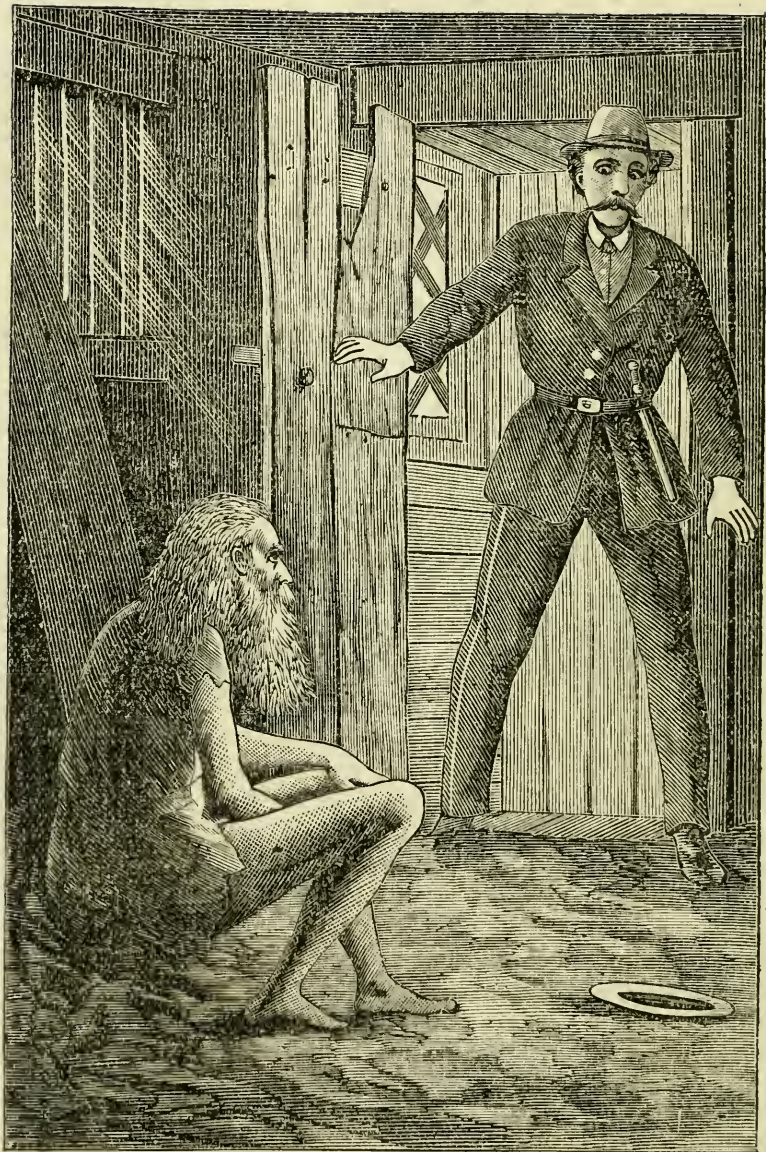
Instantly he would raise it.

"Hold your head back."

He did it.

"That will do, John, now open your mouth."

It was done.



The Policeman releasing the Victim from his cage.  
Der Polizist befreit das unglückliche Opfer aus seinem Käfig.

"Shut it."

"John, where are you living now?"

Of this question he took no notice."

"Do you like to live here?"

"Yes."

"Where did you live before you came here?"

No answer, but a look of half inquiry flitted over John's face.

"Did you not live at Fourth and Lombard Streets?"

"Oh, yes."

"For how long a time?"

No reply, but the same thoughtful look as before."

A variety of other questions was put to the imbecile, to all of which he invariably gave quick and correct replies, provided the reply could be made in monosyllables. But if it required an answer of several words he would remain silent, or apparently trying to think what he should say.

After several days residence at the almshouse he began to lose a considerable amount of his former animal stupidity, and if ordered to do anything in the same way as when he was first admitted to the institution, he would not do it at all, but remain perfectly motionless. This shows that his mental feebleness results not so much from natural causes as the artificial ones of his long confinement, and a withering isolation from the outer world. He will never be himself again, for that would be impossible, but it is quite likely that he will recover so far as to permit him to enjoy the ease and have that care of kind attendants that his share of the property will command.

Comment on the conduct of those relatives from whose charge he has been taken is entirely unnecessary. If they have consciences, their feelings must be of a rather terrible nature. One thing is certain; poor John will be taken good care of in the future, and in Furman Sheppard, Esq., he has a friend who will not allow justice to be hoodwinked.

#### A VISIT TO THE VICTIM AT THE ALMSHOUSE HOSPITAL.

Yesterday, in company with Detective Charles Miller, who had charge of the investigation of the circumstances of the case, we made a special visit to John Herriges, the subject of this sketch.

When we reached the institution, the usual ball, which is periodically given to the patients in the insane department, was at its full height, and John's nurse, an active and intelligent young man, supposing that the happiness and hilarity of the scene would have a beneficial effect upon his charge, wheeled him in his chair to the ball room. John seemed astonished somewhat, and the excitement took quick effect upon him, making him very loquacious, although the words he uttered were so unconnected as to be entirely incoherent.

Finding this to be the case, the attendant wheeled his patient to a qui-



et part of the building, where we had a long interview with him. But John remained excited, and talked almost constantly about Mc Mullin, the veritable William of the Fourth Ward, of murders and burglars, and coffins, and kindred subjects. We asked him a number of questions, but apart from now and then giving us a semi-intelligent glance, he took no notice whatever, until in the midst of it the attendant stepped suddenly to one of the insane patients, who, manifesting unusual excitement, required prompt securing. This was done by the attendant passing his arms round the man, drawing his hands forcibly down and securing them behind, as he coaxed him along to a cell.

John Herriges' face instantly lighted up with great animation as he exclaimed, pointing to the two:

"Ha! that's the way they kill them, that's it, Mully, Mully good fellow!—he! he! he!"

He constantly has this idiotic laugh.

From a gentleman at the institution we gleaned the following in relation to the victim and his family, which he assured us was the correct history of the affair. In some essential points it seems to conflict with the sister's statement made to the reporter of the Sunday Dispatch.

The father's name was Bernard Herriges, who went to Oregon in 1843, and settled in Walumet Valley, and there died and left land worth about \$400, in the executorship of Mr. Glasson and Dr. Theophilus Degan. The will is recorded in the probate court of Clarkamas County, Oregon, and explicitly directs what is to be done with the property. By some means or other no claim was established, and the land referred to was occupied by General Abeneathy for twenty years. This information was given in reply to a letter that was written in 1868, by Hon. Leonard Myers, member of Congress, and sent by him to Oregon.

The mother's original name was Barbara Miller, and she is now in her seventy-ninth year. The oldest son, Joseph, is fifty-six. The sisters names are Mary Ann, Sophia, Hannah and Ann Margaret. This gentleman states that John, the victim, is now forty-five years old, that he was twenty-five when he received the injury that resulted in his imbecility, and that consequently the confinement has extended more or less over the period of twenty years. On the night of the great fire at Vine Street, in 1850, he received his hurt as he was returning from a lecture, by being pushed over a railing down into an area by the rushing crowd, striking his head violently in his descent.

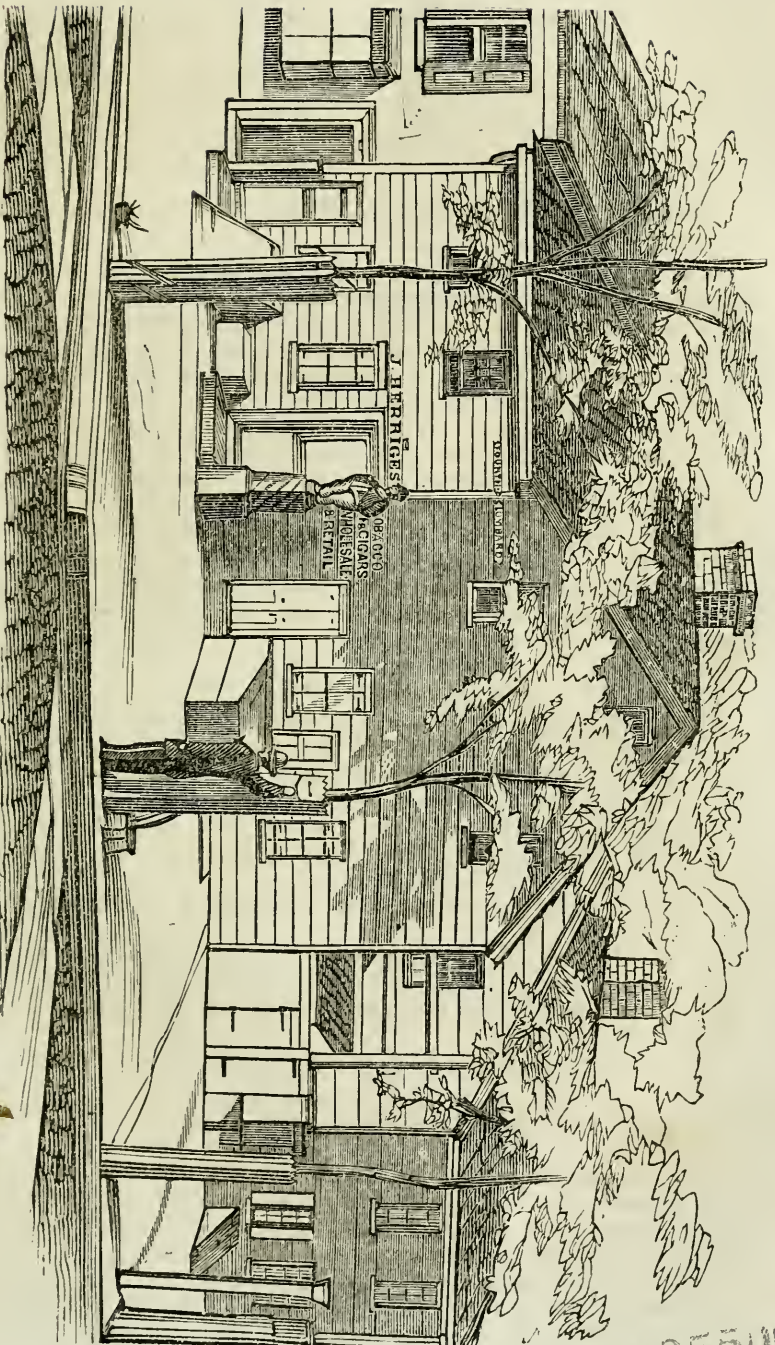
In 1847, the family received a letter from Caspar Rudolph, in Oregon, asking them to give him a power of attorney to take control of the father's possessions there. This document was drawn up by the Hon. William D. Baker, signed by all the members of the family, approved before Alderman Benn and sent out to Rudolph.

Great praise is due to Doctor Richardson of the Almshouse for the speedy improvement his careful treatment has made in John, who is, beyond doubt, naturally a very powerful man, has a fine frame and a capitally shaped head. But it is certain he will never recover from his imbecility.

The officials in charge of his case from the commencement, also deserve great praise for their faithful attention to their disagreeable duty, which could not have been performed in a more satisfactory manner. Particularly is this true of Officers Coniwasher and Reeder, Lieutenant Thomas and Detective Charles Miller.



Correct Drawing of the Herriges House at Fourth and Lombard. The scene of the Horror.  
 Genane Zeichnung des Herriges Hauses an der Vierten und Lombard Straße. Die Scene des Schreckens.



3055004

## JOSEPH HERRIGES' ACCOUNT.

Since going to press with this history an account of the affair has appeared in *THE DAY*, and which we have inserted here with the desire to place before the public whatever may be favorable to Mr. Herriges in the matter of his brother's confinement. We deem this a matter of mere justice.

The reporter having called on Mr. Herriges the following occurred during the interview.

We found Joseph Herriges a sensible, gentlemanly and educated person; having nothing to conceal, he at once entered into conversation concerning his brother; he informed us that John is his only brother, and for whom he has always entertained a brotherly affection; in his youthful days he was sent to school and educated at Joseph's expense; as a schoolboy he was, in literary attainments, about on an average with those attending school at that time. It was the elder brother's intention to fit him for the high school, and with that intention he not only sent him to the public schools, but also sent him to a night school, that he might more rapidly advance in his studies. As evidence of the fact, Mr. Herriges brought forth an old time receipt-book and showed us the following receipt:

Received January 12, 1838, of Mr. Joseph Herriges, five dollars in full for one quarter's tuition of brother John B. Herriges, at evening school, including light and stationary.

\$5.

R. O. R. LOUETT.

Reporter—When did the insanity of John begin to develop itself?

Mr. Herriges—It first began to show itself when he was twenty years of age. At that time he had only temporary fits of abstraction, which grew worse from time to time, until, at the age of twenty-six, he became wholly insane, and, what is unusual in insanity, he would never eat anything unless fed like an infant. Hunger could not tempt him to eat, nor thirst to drink, any more than it could tempt the infant of three months to eat or drink without assistance.

Reporter—Why did you not attempt a cure in accordance with the usual method?

Mr. Herriges—I did. I became acquainted with Dr. R. K. Smith, who informed that a cure might be effected, and in accordance with his suggestions, I sent him to the insane department of the almshouse as the following will testify.

Mr. Herriges here produced a paper on which the following was written:

"PHILADELPHIA ALMSHOUSE.

June 23, 1870.

"This is to certify that John B. Herriges was admitted to the insane department of this institution on the 21st day of December 1855, aged twenty-seven years, born in Philadelphia, single, and by occupation a tobaccoconist, and taken out on liberty and did not return.

"From the register in agent's office.

"Attest,

ALFRED D. W. CALDWELL,  
House Agent.

"Witness present—J. C. Freno."

Reporter—How long did he remain under treatment there?

Mr. H.—About one month.

Reporter—Why so short a length of time?

Mr. H.—During the time he was there he became so emaciated, either from improper care in feeding him or from a bad attack of dysentery, that he had scarcely any life in him, and his mother insisted on bringing him home to nurse him. To save his life and to satisfy mother, I procured a carriage and brought him home, where by careful treatment he was restored to his usual good health.

Reporter—Why did you permit your brother to remain so dirty?

Mr. H.—It was an impossibility on our part to prevent it.

Reporter—Is it true you kept him confined in the small room overhead as it is stated in the papers.

Mr. H.—It is not true; my brother had the range of the house and yard at all times, but no more; I could not let him go in the street, for he had no appreciation whatever of danger, and he was therefore liable at any moment to be run over.

At this point the mother put in an appearance. Introducing ourselves to her, she remarked. "I hope you will give a truthful statement of what we tell you." Informing her our motto was "Truth without Fear," she appeared much better satisfied. We asked her if her son had been much care upon her. She informed us he was a constant care; that from the time he was about twenty-five years of age there had never a mouthful of food passed his lips except what was fed to him as we would feed a helpless infant.

Reporter—What do you assign, madam, as the primary cause of his insanity?

Mrs. H.—At the age of nineteen my son began attending lectures given by anti-meat eaters, spiritualists etc., and impressed with their nonsensical doctrines, he, about that time, quit eating meat and took to a vegetable diet, and I think those lectures, together with this diet, had much to do with it.

Reporter—I do not understand how a vegetable diet could cause insanity, when it is well known that Horace Greeley is a vegetiutarian?

Mrs. H.—Well, isn't he insane sometimes?

Reporter—Mr. Bennett, of the *Herald*, and Dana, of the *Sun*, say he is; but they think so because Mr. Greeley venerates a dilapidated white hat, wears shocking bad shoes, and is a member of the free love order.

Mrs. H.—Well, those lectures certainly had much to do with his insanity, for his disease began to develop soon after his attendance upon them.

Reporter—Some of the papers stated he was confined because of a desire on the part of his family to get \$40,000, alleged to have been left him and to accomplish which, they further intimated that your husband did not die a natural death.

Mrs. H.—My son John never had any money in his own right; he has been kept, maintained and clothed by his brother Joseph ever since his affliction, and indeed long previous to it. As for intimations concerning my husband, the whole thing must have originated in the brain of a woman of fervid imagination, claiming to have some connection with the *Sunday Dispatch*. That lady called to see me, and with acts of kindness, such as throwing her arms around me, and informing me she would send a carriage to have me taken away for fear the crowd around the house



would do me bodily injury, and with a promise to give a true account, she got a full and true statement of the case; but to my surprise and indignation, published nothing but a tissue of falsehoods. How a young woman professing to be a lady could so act towards me, an old woman of eighty, I cannot comprehend.

Mrs. Herriges then went on to tell us her poor afflicted boy had been the one care of her life; that she took him away from the insane asylum because she knew they did not know how to feed him, and that he would soon die there if allowed to remain; that she had ever watched over him with all the affection of a mother, never wearying in her attendance upon him.

When we asked, "What of your husband?" we were informed that many years ago he went to Oregon, took up a section of ground in Villamette valley, previous to which he had built himself a house in Oregon City. He died about twenty years ago, and the first knowledge we had of it was from a Caspar Rudolph, living in Oregon, and who was formerly from this city. A power of attorney was sent to Rudolph to enable him to settle the estate. Upon his taking the necessary legal steps he learned that Mr. Herriges had appointed William Glass and Dr. Theophilus Degan as his executors. He further learned these gentlemen had disposed of all his property, a short time after which they left Oregon.

After leaving the family we next directed our steps to the insane asylum of the almshouse. Arriving there we made ourselves acquainted with Dr. Richardson, who has charge of the insane. We found the doctor one of the most obliging public officials we have ever met. He appeared to esteem it a pleasure to give us all the information he could in regard to the insane. The doctor has had charge of the insane since December 1866. Previous to that time he was connected with the poor department for many years. Informing the doctor our visit was for the purpose of conversing with him in relation to John Herriges, he at once informed us the Herriges family had received a great and uncalled for injury from the press of this city. As for John he was hopelessly insane, and was doubtless so from the first. He told us insanity incurable was stamped upon every lineament of his countenance, and as for the filthy condition in which he was found that signified nothing. His filthy habits appear to come to him periodically: that is, every other night he will pass his excrement, after which he will smear the walls, floor and his own face and body with it, presenting one of the most disgusting sights the doctor ever witnessed. The doctor informed us that some forms of insanity ran that way, and instanced one particular case of a lady of education and refinement who came under his notice. She acted precisely similar to John Herriges during the time she was under his care. The lady was cured however and has resumed her place in the fashionable world.

Dr. Richardson also informed us that insanity frequently ran to the opposite of dirty habits, one patient, now in the asylum, is continually, if allowed, engaged in washing himself; fifty times a day or more would he go through his ablutions. And it is more frequently in the other direction; we were informed that Herriges cell had to be white-washed and cleaned every other day; that he cannot feed himself at all; when John first entered the asylum the only meal he seemed to enjoy was his dinner; now he eats his breakfast and supper with a relish; in fact he

was just in the act of taking supper when we paid a visit to John Herriges; we found a man of five feet eight inches, weighing about 140 pounds, with a skin as white as any lady's in the city; all traces of the dirt the *Sunday Dispatch* had ground into his flesh so deep, as never to be washed out, was completely gone, and John presented a better, more gentlemanly appearance than any other man in the asylum. Dr. Richardson made the remark that John had been fed with food of a diversified character; that there was no speck of scrofula appearing upon his body. \* \* \* \* \* He requires to be wheeled on a chair to his meals and back again. His food has to be put in his mouth, or he would never eat, and, altogether, he is one of the most deplorable cases of insanity we have ever seen; and that the sober, second thought of the public will award his family due credit for what they did for him, there can be no doubt; if not before, at least after the trial of Joseph, before a judge and jury shall have taken place.

At the same time we must insert here also the following paragraph, which is taken from *The Day* newspaper of Thursday June 16th. The article is headed: "*A Poor Idiot Caged Up In a Filthy Room For Many Years.*"

"The defendant \* \* \* claimed that he had given his brother all the necessary attention and that the condition of affairs at the house was exaggerated by the witnesses. *That this is not the case, our reporter who visited the premises in company with Chief Mulholland, Coroner Taylor, and other officers can testify.*"

"Alderman Kerr stated that he had known the defendant for twenty years, and knew him as a man of property and owner of real estate. \* \* \* never knew he had a brother living; he was abundantly able to furnish him with better accomodation."

The facts which we obtained at the Almshouse can be thoroughly relied upon as being correct as we got them directly from Detective John O'Grady who had been detailed specially by Mayor Fox in conjunction with Detective Benjamin Franklin to work up the facts in the case. Officer O'Grady went to the Herriges house and searched it thoroughly the day that the trunk and bags were taken away from the premises. There were the wildest rumors in regard to this circumstance which were entirely unjust as the trunk and bags contained nothing only valuable papers which Herriges, fearing the house would be mored down by the mob, wished to save by thus removing them.

Officers O'Grady and Franklin merit special commendation for the manner in which they worked up their part of the case.



Likeness of the Brother and Mother of the Victim.  
 Bildniß von dem Bruder und der Mutter des unglücklichen Opfers.









**This book is under no circumstances to be  
taken from the Building**

[illegible]

JUN 6 - 1927

